

**VILLAGE BASED ADVOCATES  
AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE**

# TALANOA TOOLKIT

*Facilitating Conversations and  
Dialogues to Address Family Violence  
in Samoan Communities*

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The Toolkit for Village Based Advocates against Family Violence: Facilitating Conversations and Dialogues to Address Family Violence in Samoan Communities is developed with technical support from the UN Women Fiji Multi-Country Office. UN Women's support is through the Pacific Partnership to End Violence against Women and Girls (Pacific Partnership). The Pacific Partnership brings together governments, civil society organizations, communities and other partners to promote gender equality, prevent violence against women and girls (VAWG), and increase access to quality response services for survivors. The Pacific Partnership is funded primarily by the European Union, and the Governments of Australia and New Zealand, and UN Women, and is led by the Pacific Community (SPC), UN Women and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.

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Illustrations and Design: Onomea Productions





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# Foreword

The 2018 National Public Inquiry Report on Family Violence (NIFV) provided a critical lens on the reality of family violence as a serious social and health issue in Samoa. It gave way to creating safe spaces where "the silence about violence in our Samoan homes" was no longer a topic that was taboo and that we as a nation need to "let the truth be out and right be done"[1].

In addressing family violence, the NIFV recommended that a collective approach by the whole nation was required in order to generate and sustain change in attitudes and deeply rooted mindsets that perpetrate violence [2]. This required the proactive role of Government, politicians, Village Fono, church leaders, fathers and parents, family, healthcare professionals, judiciary, police, media and neighbors.

At the village level, it was recognized that the role of village communities through the Village Fono, churches and the family as advocates was crucial in addressing family violence in the homes. This is mainly due to the fact that they would be better positioned to know and understand the situation and context. It is with great hope that this Toolkit will contribute and provide effective guidance to these advocates to ensure a Samoa that is free from violence.

We express our appreciation to and acknowledgment of Silivelia Faye Hunt-loane & Tuiloma Sina Retzlaff for bringing this work together, Lufi Taulealo for translating the text, and UNWomen for its technical and financial assistance.

Luamanuvao Katalaina Sapolu  
OMBUDSMAN

[1] See Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018).

[2] Ibid.

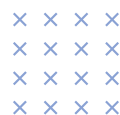
\*Photo credit: Savali Newspaper





# Contents

Foreword	<b>4</b>
Introduction	<b>6</b>
Purpose of the Toolkit	<b>7</b>
Social Norms that promote violence	<b>8</b>
Structure of the Toolkit	<b>11</b>
PART 1: Fundamental Guiding principles	<b>12</b>
PART 2: Fa'asamoa, Human Rights and Faith in addressing family violence	<b>17</b>
PART 3: What is family violence (including gender-based violence)	<b>18</b>
PART 4: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)	<b>19</b>
PART 5: Violence against Children	<b>29</b>
PART 6: Violence against other groups (Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), elderly, in-laws, fa'afafine & fa'atama, other relations within the family)	<b>40</b>
PART 7: Resources for Advocates	<b>46</b>
References	<b>59</b>



# Introduction

In line with a holistic and national coordinated approach to ending violence in Samoa driven by the Fa'asamoa, Faith and human rights framework, this Toolkit is a prevention tool which provides a guide for any village based advocate against family violence in Samoa (VBA) for facilitating conversations and dialogues to address family violence in community and family settings.

It contains information about the definition of family violence and the different types of violence that exist and continue to affect women, girls, children and other vulnerable groups in Samoa. It also contains information on services that can be provided to those affected by family violence, as well as tips on the do's and don't's when engaging in conversations about family violence. Most importantly, the Toolkit provides key messages that challenge practices and debunk myths and beliefs that normalize and perpetrate family violence. It utilizes a Samoan lens to ensure transformational change in behaviors and attitudes and bring about a 'violence free' Samoa and safer future for everyone.

The Toolkit is developed and can be used by a broad range of actors advocating against family violence. They can include village representatives, village family safety committees, church ministers, youth representatives, family matai, and any other member of the community. It seeks to ensure that any person, regardless of lived-experience, socioeconomic background, status, gender identity, sexual orientation to name a few - equally have access to the knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate conversations and dialogues on family violence prevention in their respective communities.

The Toolkit can be adapted and used in any community awareness on family violence prevention in districts, villages, churches and organizations and for individual one on one counseling [3]. It is aligned with national and international protocols and standards on family violence and gender-based violence (GBV) prevention. It is important to note that the Toolkit is only intended to guide advocates in facilitating conversations and dialogues on awareness and advocacy about family violence in Samoa.

## THE TOOLKIT IS NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO VICTIMS/SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE.

There are designated specialist support or service providers who have the role and the training to provide services, including counseling, crisis care and others to assist in services required by those affected.

[3] It is important to note that counseling here does not mean provide expert counseling services. It refers merely to having open discussions with one another to share views and impart knowledge.

**Talofa  
Lava  
Village  
Based  
Advocate!**  
**My name is  
Sina and  
this Toolkit  
will help  
you talk,  
discuss  
and  
advocate  
safely in  
preventing  
violence.**



# Purpose of the Toolkit

The overall purpose of the Toolkit is to ensure that conversations about addressing family violence are guided by consistent, culturally specific, survivor centered, appropriate and relevant messaging that will deliver positive outcomes for victims/survivors (including perpetrators) of family violence.

Key messages contained in this Toolkit have been carefully developed taking into account context and approaches of the various actors working in this space aimed at discouraging deeply rooted mindsets and practices as well as debunk myths that continue to perpetrate family violence in homes and communities and thus preventing further harm to individuals and families.



## Social Norms that promote violence

Although family violence is mainly caused by power and control, it is also perpetrated by different societal norms, practices and beliefs.

Key messages in this Toolkit aim to address various practices that continue to perpetrate family violence in homes and communities. Four of these practices include:



The key messages also provide guidance for VBAs when discussing various topics relating to family violence in their communities.

Examples of such topics include:

- Root causes of Family violence;
- Triggers, contributing factors and impacts of family violence to families;
- Alternative methods of disciplining children;
- Healthy relationships;
- Mutual partnerships (roles and responsibilities);
- Basic communication skills.

The key messages aim to enable courageous and empowering conversations in addressing intimate partner violence (IPV), violence against children as well as violence affecting other vulnerable groups in communities including persons with disabilities (PWDs), persons of diverse gender identities and sexual orientation, the elderly and those who feel silenced.



















## Structure of the Toolkit

Follow the ICONS for each Part of the Toolkit. The Toolkit will be structured as follows:

- 

**PART 1: Fundamental Guiding Principles**
- 
**PART 2: Fa'asamoa, Human Rights and Faith in addressing family violence**
- 
**PART 3: What is family violence (including gender-based violence (GBV))**
- 
**PART 4: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)**
- 
**PART 5: Violence against Children**
- 
**PART 6: Violence against other groups (Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), elderly, in-laws, fa'afafine & fa'atama, other relations within the family )**
- 
**PART 7: Resources for Advocates**

Messages will be contained in Parts 4, 5 and 6 and will focus in providing appropriate responses to the four key practices that perpetrate family violence – Privacy, Taboo, Shame, and Victim Blaming – to ensure that such practices are discouraged. The messages are targeted to various audiences and groups including – victims/survivors, perpetrators, parents, and the community (including church and village leaders, neighbors, general public).





## PART 1: Fundamental Guiding Principles

**SURVIVOR-CENTERED APPROACH** [4]: The survivor of violence is prioritized including their needs, wishes, rights and diversity. This includes ensuring that survivors have access to and full information about available, accessible and quality services to address their care and support needs. A survivor-centered approach inherently centers the survivor and their agency, including ensuring every decision made related to the survivor and their experience is done by the survivor themselves. VBAs will ensure that should a survivor willingly disclose their experiences, they are equipped to listen to survivors, provide accurate information on referrals and how to access available services towards their recovery and healing, and in communities, raise awareness about violence and end the silence on the issue of GBV. The components of a survivor-centered approach include:

1. **SAFETY:** It is essential to ensure the safety of the survivor as the number one priority; oftentimes this includes their children and other dependents.
2. **RESPECT:** All actions taken are guided by the respect for the survivor's wishes, choices, rights and dignity. They are the experts of their own care and therefore as a VBA you are part of facilitating what this looks like for them. This involves active listening, allowing them to share their story and truth, not interrupting or putting words into their mouths, telling them what to do and making personal judgments. Then most critically, a VBA's role is to provide accurate information to them on available services that can facilitate their care and support.
3. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** People have the right to choose to whom they will or will not tell their story. Maintaining confidentiality means not sharing any information about the survivor to anyone, including not writing down, recording, taking pictures or any other form of documentation. You must always ensure the survivor's trust and empowerment.
4. **NON-DISCRIMINATION:** Survivors of violence must receive equal and fair treatment and access to services, regardless of their age, sex, race, marital status, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic or differentiating feature.

**DO NO HARM:** A 'do no harm' approach involves taking all measures necessary to avoid causing further harm first and foremost to survivors as a result of one's actions and words [5]. For example, no one is better positioned to make decisions on a survivor's safety than the survivor themselves; despite best intentions, telling survivors what to do, judging their decisions, or thinking one knows better in how to handle a survivor's situation can lead to more violence and even death for the survivor. Strict adherence to the survivor-centered approach outlined above as well as being trained and knowledgeable on the available GBV services and referral pathways are critical to ensure doing no

[4] See Samoa Ministry of Women Community & Social Development, Samoa Inter-Agency Essential Services: Guide for Reporting to gender-based violence and child protection (January 2021), pp. 6-8.

[5] UNFPA, Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies (2015). Retrieved from [https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GBVIE.MinimumStandards.Publication.FINAL\\_ENG.pdf](https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GBVIE.MinimumStandards.Publication.FINAL_ENG.pdf).





## PART 1: Fundamental Guiding Principles



harm. Community members and VBAs should not collect any personal information about the survivor, but instead share accurate information about available support and services and support the survivor to access them should the survivor want to.



**EMPATHY:** Is the ability to show understanding through kindness and compassion to survivors of violence. This is not the same as sympathy or pity as this can inhibit the survivor/s to use their own power toward their recovery of healing. This is where you as a VBAs can provide comfort, validation and encouragement.

**EMPOWERMENT:** The survivor/s of violence and abuse can be encouraged to take back 'power and control' of their lives – as a VBA you can facilitate this process of restoration for them by reconnecting them to their power 'within'. This is a strength-based process that helps survivors recognize the abuse of power they have experienced and to be encouraged that they have it in them to take it back and be in charge of their own lives.

**RIGHTS BASED:** The voices of survivor/s are paramount in the referral process from informing them of their rights and responsibilities; help them identify and express their needs; and provide help and support in knowing the appropriate course of action that best meets their needs.

**COMMUNITY STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH:** As a VBA your role is essential in promoting safer and healthy village communities and families for all. Your community approach and advocacy as 'agents of positive change' is part of a bigger picture of equal partnership and collaboration to empower people to create and take ownership of prevention and protection programmes that are relevant to their context to ensure safety for all.

**DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS:** It is highly likely in Samoa, you will know or know of the victims/survivors of abuse – it is important that you reveal and share this information to survivors should the survivor willingly disclose their experiences to you. This sharing of your conflict of interests then allows the survivor to make a choice if they want to share more information with you or not. It is critical that the survivor-centered approach is upheld regardless of whether or not you know a survivor.





## PART 1: Fundamental Guiding Principles

### General messages for facilitating conversations and dialogues on family violence PREVENTION [6]

#### Community generally

- Respect the dignity of others regardless of their age, status, disability or gender identity and sexual orientation.
- Physical, Verbal and Sexual Violence is never acceptable and against the law in Samoa.
- Violence is not part of Fa'asamoa.
- Violence is not a solution.
- Violence is not a private matter.
- Love and Violence does not go together.
- Respect your elders.

#### Family

- Everyone has the right to feel safe and live without fear in their own home.
- Provide a supportive and caring environment for everyone to enjoy.
- Recognize and strengthen the 'vā tapuia.
- Make a positive influence.

#### Church/faifeau

- Be proactive in the prevention of family violence through promoting non-violence and preaching a nonviolence theology.
- Offer help/support through spiritual guidance and act as an early warning system.
- Set limits on church obligations linked to financial capacity of families to minimize stress that can trigger family violence.
- Make a positive influence.

#### Neighbors

- Talk to your neighbors and don't be afraid to report incidents of violence to the relevant authorities where there is imminent harm to life.

#### Fathers/parents

- Identify and use positive parenting methods when disciplining children.
- Talk (talanoa), listen and spend time with mother and children.
- Listen and respect your children's views.
- Provide guidance, care, love and support.
- Have mutual respect for one another.
- Make a positive influence

#### Village Fono

- Take a leading and proactive role in the prevention of family violence through making family violence as an area of concern for the Village Fono.
- Encourage reporting and monitor protection orders and parole in relation to family violence.
- Make a positive influence.

[6] See Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018) p. 32.







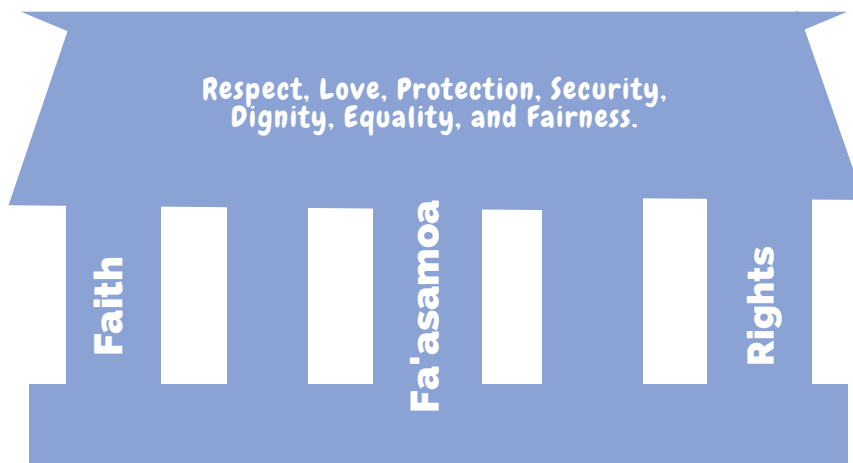




## PART 2: Fa'asamoa, human rights and faith in addressing family violence



The principles contained within the Fa'asamoa, Faith and human rights framework contain standards, values, norms and approaches which when well applied, can prevent and protect against all forms of family violence [7]. Some of these shared values and principles include: **Respect, Love, Protection, Security, Dignity, Equality, and Fairness.**



1. The Fa'asamoa embraces inclusivity, respect, communication and peace. It adheres to the view that its principles are interlinked and interdependent, similar to that of human rights. Therefore, the relationship between human rights and the Fa'asamoa can be mutually reinforcing given they are both rooted in dignity of the person, love, equality and respect.
2. Faith and Christian values are founded on unconditional love, kindness, respect, integrity, peace and forgiveness, which are invariably interlinked with the Fa'asamoa in the same mutually reinforcing manner as described between the Fa'asamoa and human rights.
3. Human rights principles are inextricably linked to the Fa'asamoa and Faith.



**Solutions to family violence prevention are strengthened by an approach encompassing of Fa'asamoa, Faith and human rights values and principles**



[7] Ibid, p. 35.





### PART 3: What is Family Violence (including GBV)?

Violence generally is a pattern of behaviors where one person tries to dominate and control the other.

Forms of violence, including GBV[8] and violence against children that occur within the family include the following:

- Acts of physical violence, such as slapping, hitting, kicking, and beating.
- Sexual violence, including forced sexual intercourse, marital rape and other forms of sexual coercion and harassment.
- Emotional (psychological) abuse, such as insults, belittling, constant humiliation, intimidation (e.g. destroying things), threats of harm, threats to take away children.
- Controlling behaviors, including isolating a person from family and friends; monitoring their movements; and restricting access to financial resources, employment, education, or medical care.

The main cause of the violence is the embedded belief and view of the perpetrator that they have power and control over the individual/s and therefore do not see themselves as being responsible for their actions or doing anything wrong [9].



[8] Gender-Based violence refers to harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms and disproportionately affects women. It takes many forms and acts of violence that result in physical, sexual or psychological (emotional) harm or suffering to women and girls that can include but not limited to stalking, threats, and socioeconomic deprivation. GBV disproportionately affects women and girls in areas such as domestic violence, family violence, sexual harassment/assault, sexual abuse and others – see UNHCR, “Gender-based violence”. Retrieved from <https://www.unhcr.org/gender-based-violence.html>. Accessed 25 October 2021.

[9] World Health Organization, “Violence – a global public health problem”. Retrieved from [https://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/violence/world\\_report/en/chap1.pdf](https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/chap1.pdf). Accessed 25 October 2021.



## PART 4: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)



### ABOUT

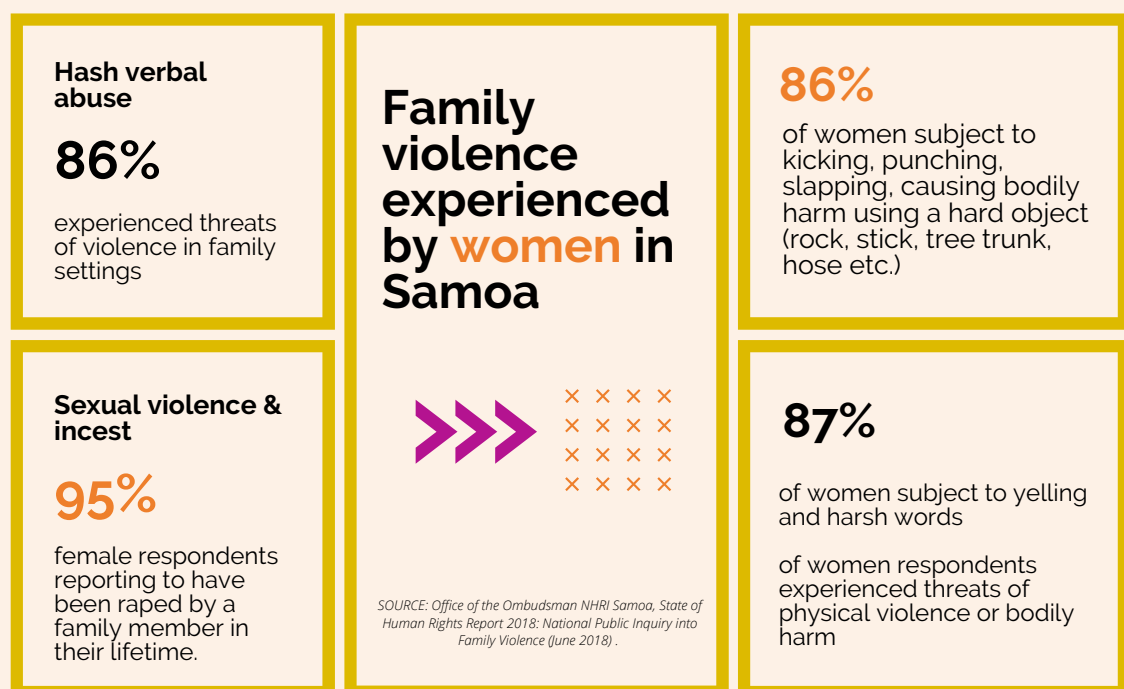
IPV is one of the most common forms of GBV in Samoa [10]. It refers to any behavior within an intimate relationship that causes physical, psychological or sexual harm to those in the relationship [11].

IPV can happen to married and unmarried couples as well as couples who are in the dating stage of their relationship. It can also happen between couples who are separated or divorced as well as same sex couples [12].

### WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

IPV occurs in all settings and among all socioeconomic, religious and cultural groups. The overwhelming burden of IPV is borne by women [13]. In Samoa, it is well established that this behavior is perpetrated by men towards women, although women can be violent in relationships with men [14].

The most common perpetrators of violence against women are male intimate partners or ex-partners. By contrast, men are far more likely to experience violent acts by strangers or acquaintances than by someone close to them [15].



[10] See Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018) .

[11] World Health Organization, "Understanding and addressing violence against women: Intimate Partner Violence". Retrieved from [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO\\_RHR\\_12.36\\_eng.pdf](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf). Accessed 23 October 2021.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] See Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018) .

[15] World Health Organization, "Understanding and addressing violence against women: Intimate Partner Violence". Retrieved from [https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO\\_RHR\\_12.36\\_eng.pdf](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/77432/WHO_RHR_12.36_eng.pdf). Accessed 23 October 2021.



## PART 4: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

### CONSEQUENCES OF IPV [16]

**Injury and Physical Health:** bruises and welts; lacerations and abrasions; abdominal or thoracic injuries; fractures and broken bones or teeth; sight and hearing damage; head injury; attempted strangulation; and back and neck injury

**Mental health and suicide:** depression, anxiety and phobias. Emotional distress, thoughts of suicide, and attempted suicide were significantly higher among women who had ever experienced physical or sexual violence than those who had not.

**Sexual and reproductive health:** unintended and unwanted pregnancy, abortion and unsafe abortion, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, pregnancy complications, pelvic inflammatory disease, urinary tract infections and sexual dysfunction

**Homicide and other mortality:** some end up being killed by their husband or boyfriend, often in the context of an abusive relationship. Negatively impact on friendships and relationships: IPV can lead to parents separating. It also impacts on friendships and relationships within the extended family, church and village.

**Negatively impact on friendships and relationships:** IPV can lead to parents separating. It also impacts on friendships and relationships within the extended family, church and village.

**Effect on children:** IPV against women and negative social and health consequences for children, including anxiety, depression, poor school performance and negative health outcomes.



### GENDER IMBALANCE

in decision-making acting as a barrier to family violence prevention decision-making

**6/51**

seats in Parliament held by WOMEN (result of the 2021 Supreme Court ruling that indicated that 10% of women in Parliament is six)

Churches have women in different levels of leadership. However, on the whole, decision-makers are mostly male.

**22%**

of all Matai in Samoa are women.

SOURCE: Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018).

**36**

Villages do not allow women to hold matai title.

**21 (8%)**

villages recognize women as matai but do not allow women to sit on council meetings.

[16] Ibid.



## PART 4: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)



### MYTH

*Intimate partner violence is a private family matter [17].*



### FACT

Violence of all forms including IPV is a national and global social issue. It affects everyone - country, entire family, village and church.

MYTH or FACT, its important to correct some of the myths about Violence in your talanoa or conversations.

**Share with your family, village, and community the FACTS and KEY MESSAGES to better prevent violence themselves!**

### KEY MESSAGE

**All forms of violence are NOT a private matter. It is a national social issue. Government, Village and Churches have a role to play in addressing it.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Victims/survivor, Perpetrator, Community**

*Speaking out to report family violence will bring shame to the reputation of the family and village [18].*

Fear or refusal to speak out has shown to only cause further harm to the victim/survivor and families and the continuation of violence without intervention and support.

**It is more honorable to speak out and survive than to hide away and fear.**

**Refusal by family and village leaders to report to relevant authorities' serious crimes of violence is an obstruction of justice. It also puts the victim/survivor at greater risk of serious harm.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Victims/survivor, Community**

*Sexual intercourse is a man's right in marriage [19].*

*Women denying sex with their partner is a form of violence against men and a violation of men's basic needs.*

Regardless of marital status sexual activity must always be consensual.

Denying sex with a partner is not considered a form of violence under the law.

**Sexual violence including marital rape is a criminal offence under the Crimes Act 2013, punishable by up to life imprisonment [20].**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Victims/survivor, perpetrator, Community**

[17] Arizona Coalition to End Sexual & Domestic Violence. "Domestic Violence Myths and Misconceptions." Retrieved from <https://www.acesdv.org/domestic-violence-graphics/domestic-violence-myths-and-misconceptions/>.

[18] See Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2020 VFSC Pilot Project. Retrieved from <https://ombudsman.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SHRR-2020-English-with-letter-by-PM-.pdf>.

[19] Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development. "Thematic brief myths about gender equality in the Pacific". Retrieved from [https://pacificwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Thematic-Brief\\_Myths\\_v12-FINAL-Jul2021.pdf](https://pacificwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Thematic-Brief_Myths_v12-FINAL-Jul2021.pdf).

[20] Crimes Act 2013, section 49. See also Part 7 of the Crimes Act 2013.





## PART 4: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

### MYTH

*Violence against women is sometimes justified [21].*

*Some women provoke the violence by talking back to their husbands and doing things that they know makes their husbands angry.*

*The women should always tolerate violence to keep her family together.*

*Reading the Bible and praying will solve IPV/ family violence.*

### FACT

The myths are common statements made in defense of the abuser/perpetrator. Often time's women blame themselves for their husbands' sexual indiscretions with other women and girls. For example, they did not take care of themselves or look their best and or meet their husbands' sexual needs. This essentially puts the blame on the woman, which is a form of manipulation, control and sexism.

Although reading the Bible and praying can provide spiritual healing it does not address the root cause of IPV/ family violence which requires changed mindsets.

### KEY MESSAGES

**Men and women are equally entitled to the right to be free from violence and feel safe in their own homes.**

**Blaming the victim/survivor takes the responsibility away from the perpetrator and reinforces the mindset of the perpetrator that it is ok for him to beat his wife/partner.**

**There is no excuse for violence in any relationship.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Victims/survivor, perpetrator, Community**

*The Bible says that wives are inferior to husbands and should be physically disciplined if they fail to obey [22].*

The Bible is quite clear that men and women were created equally in the image of God and there is absolutely no reference to physical discipline between husband and wife or intimate partners. On the contrary there are extensive teachings around non-violence, kindness, tolerance, peacefulness and even sacrifice in the bible in regards to relationship.

**Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her – Ephesians 5:25-33**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Perpetrator, Community**

*IPV/ family violence only happens to low socio-economic families and to individuals with low educational backgrounds.*

IPV can happen and affects all different groups from all different backgrounds.

**IPV affects everyone. It does not discriminate!**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Community**

[21] Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development. "Thematic brief myths about gender equality in the Pacific". Retrieved from [https://pacificwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Thematic-Brief\\_Myths\\_v12-FINAL-Jul2021.pdf](https://pacificwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Thematic-Brief_Myths_v12-FINAL-Jul2021.pdf).

[22] Ibid.



## PART 4: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)



## MYTH

*If a woman was in real danger, she would just leave. If she hasn't left, it can't be that bad [23].*

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Community

## FACT

A woman is at highest risk of extreme violence, including murder, when she does leave an abuser. Many women stay because they are justifiably fearful for themselves or their children if they do leave. If a woman chooses to stay in an abusive relationship, it doesn't mean the situation isn't bad, it means she's worried leaving might make it even worse. Other reasons why a woman might stay in a violence environment include: Fear, low self-esteem, shame, guilt; Lack of financial independence; Desire to maintain the family unit; sometime there may be family pressure to keep the family together; Belief that the partner can and will change; Isolation – lack of family and social support networks [24].

## KEY MESSAGE

**When women stay in abusive relationships it does not mean that the situation is not bad, it means she is worried that when she leaves it may cause more harm.**

**Leaving can be an easy solution, but for some women there may be reasons that hold them back – therefore it is important to be open and understanding.**

*Only serious cases of IPV/family violence that may lead to loss of life can be reported to the Village Fono [25].*

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Cases of violence regardless of their severity still negatively impacts victims/survivors and require various solutions including reporting to police and a specialist service and not just to the Village Fono.

Community

**Sweeping cases of violence under the carpet and reporting only to the Village Fono and not to police obstructs justice allowing violence to continue to thrive and violates the right of the victim/survivor to be free from violence.**

**Any case of family violence regardless of severity must be treated as a serious matter.**

[23] Safe Steps: Family Violence Response Centre, "Family Violence Myths & Facts". Retrieved from <https://www.safesteps.org.au/understanding-family-violence/family-violence-myths-facts/>.

[24] Ibid.

[25] See Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2020 VFSC Pilot Project. Retrieved from <https://ombudsman.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SHRR-2020-English-with-letter-by-PM-.pdf>.



## PART 4: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)



### MYTH

*Only physical violence counts as family violence [26].*

### FACT

Family violence can be defined as any controlling or violent behavior that causes emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, or physical damage to a family member, partner or ex-partner, or causes them to feel fear. And, as many survivors of family violence can attest, supposedly "less serious" types of violence like emotional and psychological abuse can leave very deep scars and are very hard to overcome [27].

### KEY MESSAGES

**All violent behavior – be it emotional, psychological, or any other form – is harmful and inexcusable.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Perpetrator, Community**

*Lots of women make false claims about family violence or exaggerate how bad the abuse is [28].*

False claims about family violence are extremely rare. 80% of women who experience violence from a current partner don't contact the police about it. When talking to family, friends and others, women are more likely to downplay their experience of violence than exaggerate it [29].

**Believe the victim/survivor and do not judge them. Validate their experience of abuse by saying something like: "Thank you for sharing with me, it must have been difficult".**

**There is no shame in speaking out.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Victim, Community**

*I love you, that's why I hit you.*

*Jealousy is the cause of violence in relationships.*

Love is not expressed with violence or cruelty.

Jealousy arises from a combination of the need for power and control and traditional gender roles of men and women.

Jealousy is a very powerful emotion and it is a trigger not a cause of violence.

**There is no violence in a healthy relationship.**

**Genuine love and commitment do not harm or hurt people; love protects and honors. This is clearly demonstrated in Samoan families when principles and values of Fa'asamoa and faith are practiced, valued, and held at high regard.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Victim/survivor, Perpetrator**

[26] Ministry of Social Development NZ. Attitudes, values, beliefs about violence within families. Retrieved from <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/campaign-action-violence-research/attitudes-values-and-beliefs-about-violence-within-families.pdf>.

[27] Safe Steps: Family Violence Response Centre, "Family Violence Myths & Facts". Retrieved from <https://www.safesteps.org.au/understanding-family-violence/family-violence-myths-facts/>.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.



## PART 4: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)



## MYTH

*Anger, Alcohol and drugs are the main causes of IPV [30].*

## FACT

Anger is a tool the perpetrator uses to get what they want. Perpetrators are actually very much in control because they can stop when someone knocks on the door or the phone rings; they often direct punches and kicks to parts of the body where the bruises are less likely to show; and they are not abusing everyone who makes them "angry", but waits until there are no witnesses to abuse the one he says he loves [31].

Alcohol and drugs are not present in the vast majority of IPV/ family violence incidents reported to the police in Samoa. Furthermore, many people consume alcohol and drugs without going on to commit violence. The reality is that alcohol and drug abuse can sometimes trigger violence by altering inhibitions and decreasing patience and tolerance levels, but it is not the root cause of that violence [32].

## KEY MESSAGE

**Violent behavior is a choice.**

**Anger, Alcohol and drugs only triggers violence but are not causes of violence.**

## TARGET AUDIENCE

**Victims/survivor,  
Community**



[30] Ministry of Social Development NZ. Attitudes, values, beliefs about violence within families. Retrieved from <https://www.msd.govt.nz/documents/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/campaign-action-violence-research/attitudes-values-and-beliefs-about-violence-within-families.pdf>.

[31] See Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018).

[32] Ibid.





## PART 4: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

### TIPS

*for advocates when discussing the issue of IPV [33]*

**Remember!** Intimate partner abuse happens in a Cycle of Violence – where repeated and dangerous acts of violence become a pattern or a cycle that occurs over and over again in a relationship.

**Remember!** Cycles continue because women find it difficult to leave their abusive partners and tend to keep going back to them.

**Remember!** When a woman who has returned to her abusive partner calls for help we must treat her as if she is contacting us for the first time.

**Remember!** Listen and Link: If someone experiences IPV and asks for help, be a source of support: “listen”, show support, don’t judge and try to engage in the situation. You can “link” them to information about support services available.

**Remember!** Look out for **signs** to recognize if the **person is a victim/survivor**: IPV may be visible, or it may be more subtle. Remember it can sometimes be difficult to notice signs if someone is experiencing IPV. However, there are certain things that can help identify if someone is experiencing IPV:

- Unexplained injuries
- Personality changes, like low self-esteem in someone who was always confident
- Self-harm and suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- Afraid for their husband to know what they said or do
- Paranoia
- Emotional and cries a lot

**Remember!** Look out for **signs** to recognize if the **person is a perpetrator**: The person uses physical aggression, have unpredictable behaviors, display of jealousy, suspicious or angry even if there is no reason to be, monitor and control their partner's activity, uses verbal threats.



[33] See Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa. Village Family Safety Committees Workplans and Activities (March 2020) pp. 15-10.













## PART 5: Violence against Children



### ABOUT

Violence against children refers to all forms of physical, sexual, and emotional violence towards a child under the age of 18 [34]. This violence takes a multitude of forms, including but not limited to neglect, maltreatment, exploitation, child labor, corporal punishment, sexual violence, sexual abuse, bullying, violence committed online, such as cyber-bullying and others [35].

The most common forms of violence against children in Samoa include [36]:

- **Physical violence:** includes slapping, pinching, hitting, kicking, and beating. Like many other countries in the world, physical discipline/violence in Samoa has been used for generations as a common approach for raising children. The overwhelming majority of Samoans believe physical violence/discipline is required to teach right from wrong.
- **Sexual violence:** includes forced sexual intercourse, incest, rape, and other forms of sexual coercion.
- **Emotional/psychological abuse:** such as insults, swearing, belittling, constant humiliation, intimidation (e.g., destroying things), threats of harm.
- **Harsh verbal discipline/violence:** using harsh words to discipline children. Some reasons for this may include the lack of understanding of what constitutes harsh verbal/violence, or the consideration of it to be normal because of the way they were brought up. Harsh verbal discipline/violence of children is hard to measure as it is very rarely reported yet the consequences can be far reaching. It often goes hand in hand with physical violence
- **Violence borne out of frustrations:** often children experience discipline/violence not because the child had done something wrong but because the parent was using that as an excuse to take their frustrations out.
- **Bullying:** often children are subjected to bullying in schools as well as on social media/online.

### WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Most children in Samoa have been subjected to violence at one point in their lifetime. Children with disabilities, children with a different gender identity or sexual orientation, as well as non-biological/ adopted children are placed in even more vulnerable positions as a result of their background/ status. Adopted children for instance are treated worse by their adopted or step families than biological children i.e. E toso isi (non-biological/ adopted children), ae afisi isi (biological children) [37].

Violence against children in Samoa not only stems from parents (both biological and non-biological), but also other family members and/or caregivers [38].

[34] World Health Organization, "Violence against Children". Retrieved from [https://www.who.int/health-topics/violence-against-children#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/violence-against-children#tab=tab_1). Accessed 20 October 2021.

[35] Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, "Ending violence against children: Key messages and statistics". Retrieved from [https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/Key%20Messages\\_Short\\_0.pdf](https://www.end-violence.org/sites/default/files/paragraphs/download/Key%20Messages_Short_0.pdf).

[36] Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018) pp. 66-81.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

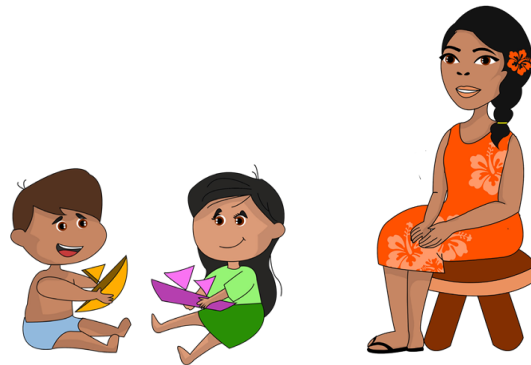




## PART 5: Violence against Children

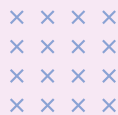
### Family violence experience by children in Samoa

SOURCE: Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018).



#### Violence towards children borne out of frustration

One recurring theme throughout the NIFV was the observation that physical and harsh verbal discipline/violence often occurred not because the child had done something wrong but as a way for the parents to take their frustrations out.



**Physical abuse: 86%**  
had been subjected to kicking, punching or other assaults.

**sexual abuse & incest: 9.5%**  
female respondents reporting to have been raped by a family member in their lifetime.

**Harsh verbal abuse: 87%**  
experienced threats of violence in the family setting.

#### Child prostitution & pornography

The NIFV also noted the occurrence of other types of sexual abuse of children, that of child prostitution (where the victims are both boys and girls), and child pornography. "Have you heard about tourists coming here for sex with young boys? Yes it has occurred and it is happening. There have been cases reported and we also see it." ~ Police outpost officer, NIFV public hearings.

## CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN [39]

- **Fuels Inter-generational Cycle of Violence:** Experiencing or witnessing violence as a child in the home can lead to children tolerating violence adopting such behaviors which they later on in life do to others.
- **Behavioral problems:** Children experiencing violence are more at risk of behavioral problems such as aggression, delinquency, and poor social functioning. They are also more likely to lack empathy towards others and further likely to perpetrate violence.
- **Negatively impact on friendships and relationships:** the inter-generational transmission of violence from an early stage has a direct impact on their relationships with intimate partners, as well as their ability to be emotionally responsive parents.
- **Violates human rights and creates further risks:** Physical and harsh verbal discipline/violence violates a child's right and also places them at further risk of violence as either a victim/survivor or perpetrator later in life.

[39] World Health Organization, "Violence against Children: key facts", (June 2020). Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children>. Accessed 19 October 2021.



## PART 5: Violence against Children



- **Result in death:** Homicide, which often involves weapons such as knives and hard objects, is among the top four causes of death in adolescents, with boys comprising over 80% of victims/survivors and perpetrators.
- **Lead to severe injuries:** For every homicide, there are hundreds of predominantly male victims/survivors of youth violence who sustain injuries because of physical fighting and assault.
- **Result in negative coping and health risk behaviors:** Children exposed to violence and other adversities are substantially more likely to smoke, misuse alcohol and drugs, and engage in high-risk sexual behavior. They also have higher rates of anxiety, depression, other mental health problems and suicide.
- **Health impact:** Lead to unintended pregnancies, induced abortions, gynecological problems, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.
- **Impact opportunities:** Children exposed to violence and other adversities are more likely to drop out of school, have difficulty finding and keeping a job, and are at heightened risk for later victimization and/or perpetration of interpersonal and self-directed violence.





## PART 5: Violence against Children



### MYTH

*Perpetrators of sexual violence against children are often strangers and people not known/close to them [40].*

### TARGET AUDIENCE

*Only girls experience sexual violence/ abuse [41].*

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Parents,  
Community**



### FACT

Most sexual violence is committed by people known to the victim/survivor. The NIFV heard multiple stories where the perpetrator of sexual violence against a child is a close family member. Other common perpetrators included teachers, pastors, neighbors, work colleagues or friends. Neither was there any upper or lower age limit of those carrying out the crimes, in keeping with research and studies undertaken in countries worldwide.

### Parents, Community

It is a dangerous myth that only girls are abused. Dangerous because it means that boys receive less attention and are therefore more vulnerable and because our support services are then not set up to deal with such cases. There have been instances documented in the NIFV where young boys/ Fa'afafine have also been victims of sexual abuse but is under-reported.

MYTH or FACT, its important to correct some of the myths about Violence in your talanoa or conversations.  
**Share with your family, village, and community the FACTS and KEY MESSAGES to better prevent violence themselves!**

### KEY MESSAGES

**Always make sure that those taking care of your children are people you really trust.**

**Young boys are also vulnerable to sexual abuse similar to young girls.**

**All children (young girls, young boys including young Fa'afafine and Fa'atama and children with disabilities) have the right to be free from any type of violence.**

[40] Ibid.

[41] Jill Davies, Family Violence Prevention Fund: A guide for domestic violence advocates (2009). Retrieved from [https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Children\\_and\\_Families/Advocates%20Guide\(1\).pdf](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/Advocates%20Guide(1).pdf).



## PART 5: Violence against Children



### MYTH

*Being smacked as a child didn't do any harm [42].*

### FACT

Children exposed to family violence are more likely to hold attitudes that justify their own use of violence. When someone says of a violent upbringing 'well it didn't do me any harm', or 'it made me the person I am today', neither are true or have any factual basis. Not every child is resilient in the face of violence. Some may not cope well with violence as others and can be deeply affected.

### KEY MESSAGE

**Not every child handles or copes with violence the same way. Each child has different coping skills which requires careful attention.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Community, Parents**

*Being exposed to violence as a child means they are destined to go on and become a perpetrator or victim of violence when they grow up [43].*

A child who is exposed to violence and who has a violent upbringing is not guaranteed or will inevitably become perpetrators as adults or that they will necessarily suffer negative consequences in their lives; many children and young people demonstrate remarkable resilience in the face of family violence.

**Do not stigmatize and assume that being exposed to violence as a child will make that child a victim or perpetrator later in life.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Parents,  
Community**

A violent upbringing increases the chance a child will go on to become a perpetrator or victim, it does not make it certain. That means that a person can have a violent upbringing and go on to lead a life totally free of violence, and indeed many do.

[42] Ibid. See also Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018).

[43] Ibid.





## PART 5: Violence against Children

### MYTH

*Violent behaviors by children are learnt from school and outside of the home [44].*

### FACT

Violent behaviors can be learned and influenced by different settings however it is most often learned from the home.

### KEY MESSAGES

**Violence is a learned behavior usually from the home.**

**Children imitate what they see and hear from their parents and close relatives.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Parents, Community**

*Physical discipline is the only way. Words are no use [45].*

*Smacking of children does not constitute violence but rather discipline.*

There are other nonviolent methods to discipline children including correcting their behaviors that exist for example, talanoa, fa'asoa.

Discipline is intended for the well-being and development of the child and the impacts of violence are certainly not in the best interests of the child and cannot be justified.

**Discipline is guidance not violence.**

**Any action (verbal or physical) towards a child that causes negative impacts commonly accepted to be caused by violence, is violence and not discipline.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Parents, Community**

*Violence against children is usually borne out of a parent's frustrations over what the child has done [46].*

Often physical and verbal violence of children is not because what the child has done but other external factors that stressed out the parent e.g. financial troubles, family obligations.

**There are other ways to overcome anger and children should not be used as punching bags to release anger and stress.**

**Open discussion without anger can help create stronger communication.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Parents, Community**

[44] Ibid.

[45] Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018).

[46] Ibid.

## PART 5: Violence against Children



## MYTH

*Young girls who are said to dress inappropriately and seductively invite sexual violence [47].*

## FACT

The clothes a person wears does not indicate sexual intent. Consent to have sex must be communicated directly. Your clothing is never an invitation for rape. The offender is ultimately responsible for the assault. This myth distorts the truth by shifting blame away from the offender and onto the victim.

## KEY MESSAGE

**Engaging in sexual activity must always be consensual.**

**Sexual violence and coercion including incest and rape of young girls and boys is a crime under the Crimes Act 2013, where the perpetrator can be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 20 years [48].**

**Blaming the cause of sexual violence on how young girls dress shifts blame and accountability away from the offender and onto the victim.**

## TARGET AUDIENCE

**Community,  
Parents**

*Children with disabilities (especially intellectual disability) are less likely to become victims of abuse than children without disabilities [49].*

Children with disabilities are three times more likely than children without them to be victims of sexual abuse, and the likelihood is even higher for children with intellectual or mental health disabilities. These children face many challenges in reporting the abuse and receiving vital services designed to meet their needs [50].

**Children with disabilities need to be listened to and believed and not stigmatized because of their disability.**

**Parents, Community**

## TARGET AUDIENCE

[47] Ibid.

[48] See Part 7 of the Crimes Act 2013.

[49] Resilience, "Sexual Violence Myths & Facts". Retrieved from <https://www.ourresilience.org/what-you-need-to-know/myths-and-facts/>. Accessed 23 October 2021.

[50] Ibid.







## PART 5: Violence against Children

### MYTH

*The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) gives children rights which lead to increased drug and alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity, disrespectful behaviors, violence, and suicide [51].*

*The CRC interferes with parental responsibility to discipline and raise one's children [52].*

### FACT

There are no rights within the CRC which permit children to engage in alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity, disrespectful behaviors, violence, and suicide, nor remove the right of the parent to raise their child as they wish. Rather, it is violence towards children which contributes to these types of perceptions of children being disrespectful etc. [53].

Article 18 of the CRC provides that parents have the prime responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child including appropriately disciplining them. No other limitations are put upon a parent's right and responsibility to raise and discipline their child.

### KEY MESSAGES

**The CRC contains a series of rights for children to ensure their development and freedom from actions that are not in their best interests, such as ensuring they are raised in an environment that is free from violence or other inhuman or degrading punishments.**

**CRC is in place to protect the dignity and integrity of the child and protecting the rights of the parents. No other limitations are put upon a parent's right and responsibility to raise and discipline their child.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

Parents, Community



[51] Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2015 and village consultations. Retrieved from [https://ombudsman.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2015\\_State-of-Human-Rights-Report-General\\_English.pdf](https://ombudsman.gov.ws/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/2015_State-of-Human-Rights-Report-General_English.pdf).

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.





## PART 5: Violence against Children



### TIPS

*for advocates when discussing the issue of violence against children [54]*

**Remember!** Children can sometimes not be aware of everything including giving consent, therefore it is important that you explain what it means so they understand and are made aware.

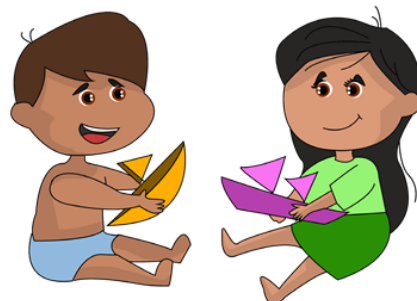
**Remember!** If you come across a child who has been abused and is in severe danger, contact the relevant authorities for assistance. The **Referral forms in Part 7: Resources for Advocates** can be a useful resource for making a referral.

**Remember! The best interest of the child is always paramount.** Any interventions to assist children suffering violence or abuse must take into consideration their best interests.

**Remember!** Always make sure that conversations with children are conducted in a way and language that they can easily understand.

**Remember!** Discussing violence against children with parents can be a challenge and can create misunderstanding. It is important to keep an open mind and create a safe space for parents to share openly and freely without being judged about their parenting skills.

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[54] Jill Davies, Family Violence Prevention Fund: A guide for domestic violence advocates (2009). Retrieved from [https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Children\\_and\\_Families/Advocates%20Guide\(1\).pdf](https://www.futureswithoutviolence.org/userfiles/file/Children_and_Families/Advocates%20Guide(1).pdf).









**Fa'atāua le isi tagata soifua**



**OMBUDSMAN**  
— NHRI SAMOA

**Happy Human Rights Day**





## PART 6: Violence against other groups

### ABOUT

Family violence does not discriminate. It also affects other groups' not just women and children. PWDs, Fa'afafine, Fa'atama, the elderly as well as other familial relationships including in-laws (i.e. nofotane and faiavā) also experience family violence whether it is physical, emotional or verbal abuse [55].

### WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Verbal abuse of **Fa'afafine** is so common that many do not see it as a problem with parents often being the most common perpetrators. Furthermore, young boys showing feminine traits at a young age are often subjected to severe violence at the hands of their own families and that this is not reported due to intimidation of the victims/survivors, fear of reprisals and being disowned, lack of effective redress and a belief that no crime has been committed [56].

**PWDs** also face violence not only from family members but from outsiders. PWDs, especially women with disabilities are subjected to abuse and exploitation and for the most part are not always reported [57]. Unfortunately, a common misconception among people in Samoa is that PWDs do not experience violence due to their disability. This is not true! This often puts PWDs at further risk of experiencing family violence.

The **elderly** also experience both physical and verbal violence from their children and other family members. Some elderly persons have been abandoned by their own families putting them at further risk of harm [58].

The position of **nofotane and faiāvā** in the Samoan family has led to them experiencing abuse at the hands of their in-laws. Nofotane women and faiāvā men are usually treated as inferiors by their in-laws placing them in a vulnerable position. Such treatment is a breach of their human rights and undermines principles of the Fa'asamoa that of mutual respect (feāvaa'i) and mutual protection (fepuipua'i) [59].

There is also a prevalence of male-on-male violence (e.g. brother on brother or uncle) female-on-female violence (e.g. sister on sister or aunt) and violence between family members themselves, which is often less talked about [60].



[55] Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018) pp. 98-100.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2016: Rights of Persons with Disabilities (June 2016).

[58] Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018) pp. 98-100.

[59] Ibid, pp. 91-92.

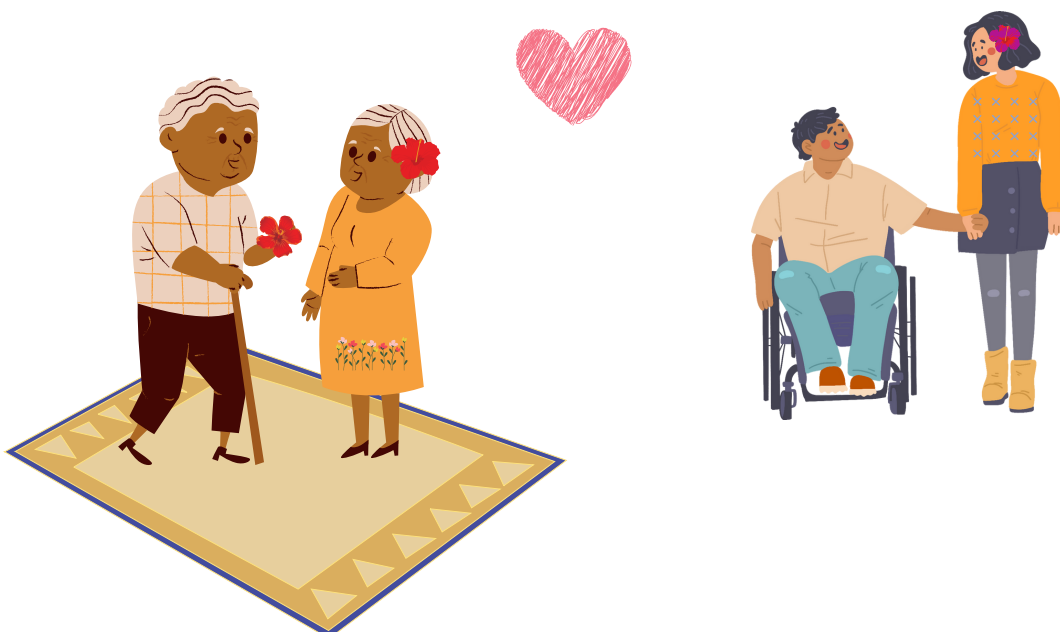
[60] Ibid, p. 94.

## PART 6: Violence against other groups



### Consequences of violence against other groups [61]

- **Mental health and isolation:** family violence can lead to depression, anxiety and in some cases suicide. It can also make people including elderly and PWDs for instance, feel isolated and vulnerable.
- **Impact on relationships:** violence perpetrated against other family members can harm relationships and lead to broken families, homes, and communities.
- **Fuels further violence:** violence begets violence. Violence between in-laws as well as with other family members if not addressed can further fuel violence creating a never-ending cycle of suffering for everyone.
- **Reinforces stigma and discrimination:** violence against Fa'afafine and Faatama, PWDs and in-laws can further reinforce stigma and discrimination on the grounds of their disability, identity, and status in the family.
- **Injury:** violence can result to hospitalization, cuts and bruises, physical inactivity, or even death.
- **Impact opportunities:** those exposed to violence and other adversities are more likely to drop out of school, have difficulty finding and keeping a job etc.



[61] Office of the Ombudsman NHRI Samoa, State of Human Rights Report 2018: National Public Inquiry into Family Violence (June 2018) pp. 66-82.







## PART 6: Violence against other groups



### MYTH

*Persons with disabilities do not get abused [61].*



### FACT

PWDs also face violence not only from family members but from outsiders. PWDs especially women with disabilities, are subjected to abuse and exploitation and for the most part are not always reported. Unfortunately, a common misconception among people in Samoa is that PWDs are not prone to violence due to their disability. This is not true!

MYTH or FACT, its important to correct some of the myths about Violence in your talanoa or conversations.  
**Share with your family, village, and community the FACTS and KEY MESSAGES to better prevent violence themselves!**

### KEY MESSAGES

**Persons with disabilities need to be believed and not stigmatized because of their disability.**

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Parents, Community**

*Fa'afafine and Fa'afatama communities rarely experience abuse in their lifetime [62].*

### TARGET AUDIENCE

**Parents, Community**

The NIFV indicated that Fa'afafine and Faatama are often subjected to severe violence at the hands of their own families and that this is not reported due to intimidation of the victims/survivors, fear of reprisals and being disowned, lack of effective redress and a belief that no crime has been committed.

**Family violence does not discriminate; it affects everyone regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.**

**Treat everyone with respect and human dignity. Do not judge!**

**"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." - Luke 6:31**

[61] Ibid.  
[62] Ibid.



## PART 6: Violence against other groups



## MYTH

*Nofotane and faiāvā are slaves and must do all the work for their in-laws [63].*

## FACT

Nofotane and Faiāvā are human beings and must be treated with the same dignity and respect as other members of the family. They have an important role to play in contributing to the development of families.

## KEY MESSAGE

**Treat everyone equally and fairly. Greater emphasis on in-laws (men and women) as maupaolo rather than nofotane/faiāvā.**

## TARGET AUDIENCE

Community, Parents



## TIPS

*for advocates when discussing the issue of violence against other groups*

**Remember!** Assist the person to seek support before you encourage them to speak out.

**Remember!** Violence does not affect a certain group of people only. It is important to not assume and to always have an open mind.

**Remember!** Everyone deals with trauma from family violence in different ways. It is important to be aware of this to ensure that your response is survivor-centered and does not cause further harm.



[63] Ibid.











## PART 7: Resources for Advocates

### RESOURCE 1: DO'S & DON'TS

#### DOs

- Believe the victim/survivor
- Be open and understanding
- Listen with care and show empathy
- Always maintain confidentiality
- Respect the privacy of the victim/survivor
- Seek consent when referring to a service or applying for a protection order on the victim/survivor's behalf
- Always refer the victim/survivor to a professional support service for specialist help



#### DON'T's

- Be judgmental
- Blame the victim/survivor for the acts of the perpetrator
- Excuse the behavior of the perpetrator
- Counsel the victim/survivor to go back to a relationship especially if it will put them in grave danger
- Tell the victim/survivor to compromise and be patient with the perpetrator
- Give expert advice or advice that would further traumatize or put the victim/survivor at further harm





## PART 7: Resources for Advocates



### RESOURCE 2: IMPORTANT THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN ASSISTING A VICTIM/ SURVIVOR OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

*If you suspect or are aware of violence happening to someone in our community, here are some important things to consider when helping:*

#### RESPONDING TO DISCLOSURE

- **Believe the victim/survivor**

It is one of the most courageous decisions that a victim/survivor of family violence can do is reveal their abusive relationship with you. This is an indication that they feel safe to disclose the abuse. Therefore IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU BELIEVE THEM in return. By believing them and giving them the space to talk you are helping them take the first step towards getting help. You can communicate belief by saying something like: "That must have been frightening for you". Moreover, validate the experience of abuse by saying something like: "Thank you for sharing with me, it must have been difficult". Finally, affirm that violence is unacceptable behavior by something like: "Violence is unacceptable; you don't deserve to be treated this way".

- **Use active listening and do not judge**

As a victim/survivor tells you their story of abuse, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU LISTEN CAREFULLY AND NOT JUDGE THEM. Experiencing abuse is traumatizing therefore the victim/survivor would need to be empathized with and be listened to without making judgments as to what may have caused or triggered the abuse. Active listening and being non-judgmental can be empowering for the victim/survivor.

- **Maintain confidentiality**

YOU MUST AT ALL TIMES PROTECT THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF ALL INFORMATION OBTAINED, except in situation where upon thorough judgment not disclosing would compromise the safety of the person, their children and/or others around them. For example, clear attempts of suicide or suicidal ideation, the continual abuse or exposure to abuse and threats of violence that could lead to a life and/or death situation. IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT BEFORE YOU ENGAGE WITH THE VICTIM/SURVIVOR THAT YOU DISCUSS THE NATURE OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND LIMITATIONS OF THEIR RIGHT TO CONFIDENTIALITY and that you will let them know if their disclosure requires further action from outside professional intervention.

- **Respect the privacy of the victim/survivor**

Be mindful and alert that for many victims/survivors of violence, privacy can have a direct connection to their physical and emotional safety and may prevent them from seeking services or requesting help. IT IS IMPORTANT TO REASSURE THE VICTIM/SURVIVOR OF THEIR PRIVACY ESPECIALLY FROM THE PERPETRATOR AND THOSE THAT COULD POTENTIALLY PERPETRATE AND ENABLE FURTHER VIOLENCE. At the same time considerations of privacy can be reassessed if it gives way to a duty to share information in order to prevent harm to the victim/survivor or their children.





## PART 7: Resources for Advocates

### AVOID GIVING EXPERT ADVICE

We all like to give advice but remember the victim/survivor are the expert of their own lives, and while it may seem to you that leaving right away is the only option to do, it may be more complicated than that. TRY TO HELP BY ASKING QUESTIONS AND GUIDING THE CONVERSATION TOWARDS THE RESOURCES THEY NEED THAT WILL EMPOWER AND INFORM THEM TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR THEM. SUCH RESOURCES INCLUDE INFORMATION ABOUT SPECIALIST SUPPORT OR SERVICES AVAILABLE THAT CAN HELP.

### KEEP RECORDS

KEEP TRACK OF ANY INDICATION OF PHYSICAL ABUSE, ANY INSTANCES THE SURVIVOR MAY TALK TO VERBAL OR EMOTIONAL ABUSE. A log of this information may be helpful for the victim/survivor in a referral that you could potentially give to the Police and/or professional support or service provider and court proceedings. Keeping records can also help protect the VBA from being held liable for anything that goes wrong later in the process.

### LEARN ABOUT LOCAL RESOURCES

There are many local resources and services available in Samoa to support a victim/survivor of family violence. THE MORE INFORMATION YOU KNOW THE MORE CONFIDENT AND BETTER EQUIPPED YOU WILL BE IN TALKING WITH THE VICTIM/SURVIVOR about their abuse and the help that is available to them.

### SAFETY PLAN

A SAFETY PLAN INVOLVES TALKING THROUGH AND COMING UP WITH WAYS TO HELP THE VICTIM/SURVIVOR STAY SAFE DURING THE ABUSE. Planning may include when they need to leave, available exits and trusted people to share with. When victims/survivors do not feel safe to leave yet, at least a safety planning conversation has occurred which is a good strategy to start with until they decide to leave.

### CONSULT AND REFER

As a VBA you are NOT a specialist support or service provider but merely advocates facilitating conversations and dialogues about family violence prevention. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IF YOU COME ACROSS A SITUATION WHERE PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE/ SPECIALIST SERVICE IS REQUIRED, YOU MUST REFER THE VICTIM/SURVIVOR TO THAT ASSISTANCE/ SERVICE.

- **Always obtain informed consent**

Most often victims/survivors have complex lives and they know best what might compromise their safety. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU OBTAIN CONSENT BEFORE REFERRING OR SHARING ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE VICTIM/SURVIVOR AND THEIR CASE TO A SPECIALIST SUPPORT OR SERVICE PROVIDER. Best practice is allowing victims/survivors to decide when, what information, and to whom their information is shared. Consent can be forgone especially in situation where the victim/survivor is a child; suffering from a mental illness/ intellectual disability; in a coma and has been unconscious for a period exceeding 6 hours; a person whom you reasonably consider unable to provide the required consent.

- **Monitor and follow-up**

After making a referral to the police, relevant agency, specialist support or service provider, you can assist the victim/survivor by monitoring their situation. If the case has been resolved, you can also follow-up and check up on the victim/survivor to see if they are okay. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IN FOLLOWING UP YOU MUST TAKE A TRAUMA INFORMED AND DO NO HARM APPROACH.



## PART 7: Resources for Advocates



### RESOURCE 3: REFERRAL PROCESS TO AGENCIES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

*If you come across a case of family violence that would require you to refer that person to a professional support service or agency, below are some of the steps you can take:*

#### Step 1: OBTAIN CONSENT AND REFER

- Always inform the person affected about your intention to make a referral and obtain their consent.

#### Step 2: INITIAL ASSESSMENT

- Refer the person to a relevant NGO, health provider or to the police for an initial assessment. When you make a referral, you must wherever possible accompany the person affected upon their consent especially in a high risk situation.

#### Step 3: LOW RISK VS. HIGH RISK CASES

- If the case is low risk (for example, no real threat or imminent danger to life) you must refer the person to a professional support service who would be able to assist with matters including – providing shelter, assessment, counseling, legal advice, financial support, rehabilitation.
- If the case is high risk (for example, there is a real threat and an imminent danger to life) you must refer the person to the Police.

#### Step 4: MONITOR

- After making the referral, you should document everything and remain the advocate for the affected person (upon their consent) to where they have been referred to.

#### Step 5: FOLLOW-UP

- Follow-up and stay connected with the person affected to ensure ongoing moral support and encouragement.





## PART 7: Resources for Advocates

### REFERRAL FORM: SPECIALIST SUPPORT OR SERVICE PROVIDER

Is the person in immediate danger?	<b>Yes</b> <i>If yes call the Police on 995</i>	<b>No</b> <i>If no refer to Specialist support or service provider</i>
<b>REFERRAL INFORMATION</b>		
Name of Referrer		
Occupation		
Contact details		
<b>INFORMATION ABOUT PERSON BEING REFERRED OR CONCERNED ABOUT: VICTIM/SURVIVOR</b>		
Name of person being referred or concerned about		
Category of person being referred or concerned about (circle answer)	Partner (wife/husband)	Child
	Fa'afafine/Fa'atama	In-law
		Elderly
		Others (please list)
Village of person being referred or concerned about		
Date of birth of person being referred or concerned about		
Gender of person being referred or concerned about		
Does the person have a disability?		
Occupation of person being referred or concerned about – type and name of employer/ school		



## PART 7: Resources for Advocates



INFORMATION ABOUT THE PERSON CAUSING VIOLENCE: PERPETRATOR			
Name of person causing violence			
Village of person causing violence			
Date of birth of person causing violence			
Gender of person causing violence			
Does the person have a disability			
Occupation of person causing violence – type and name employer/ school			
PEOPLE AFFECTED			
Name of children affected (if it is a domestic/ intimate partner violence case)			
Ages of children affected (if it is a domestic/ intimate partner violence case)			
Does the child/ren have a disability			
Name of other people affected by violence			
Ages of other people affected by violence			
Does the person(s) have a disability			
CASE DETAILS			
Reasons for the referral – please explain			
Type of abuse concerned (circle answer)	Physical	Sexual/rape	Emotional
	Verbal	Financial	Others (please list)
How were you made aware of the issue			
When did the events occur – date and time			
Other factors involved (circle answer)	Alcohol	Mental health	Drugs
	Children not in school	History of violence	History of offending
Any interventions being undertaken?			
Any other information that would assist?			

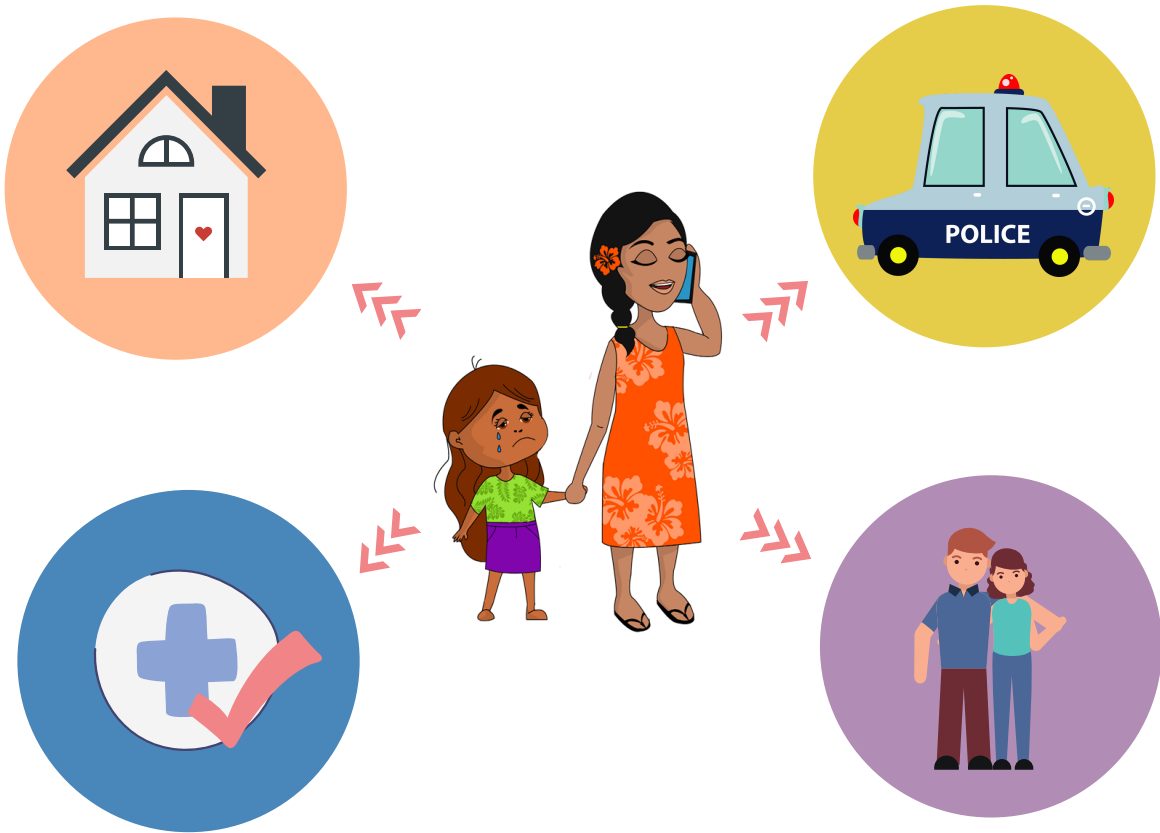






PART 7: Resources for Advocates

CONSENT & CONFIDENTIALITY	
Is the person aware about the referral?	
Did that person give consent?	
Do you wish to share the information confidentiality (if possible)?	
RECEIVED BY	
Referral received by	
Contact details	
Name and contact details of person outcome fed back to	



## PART 7: Resources for Advocates



## Referral form: Ministry of Women Community and Social Development

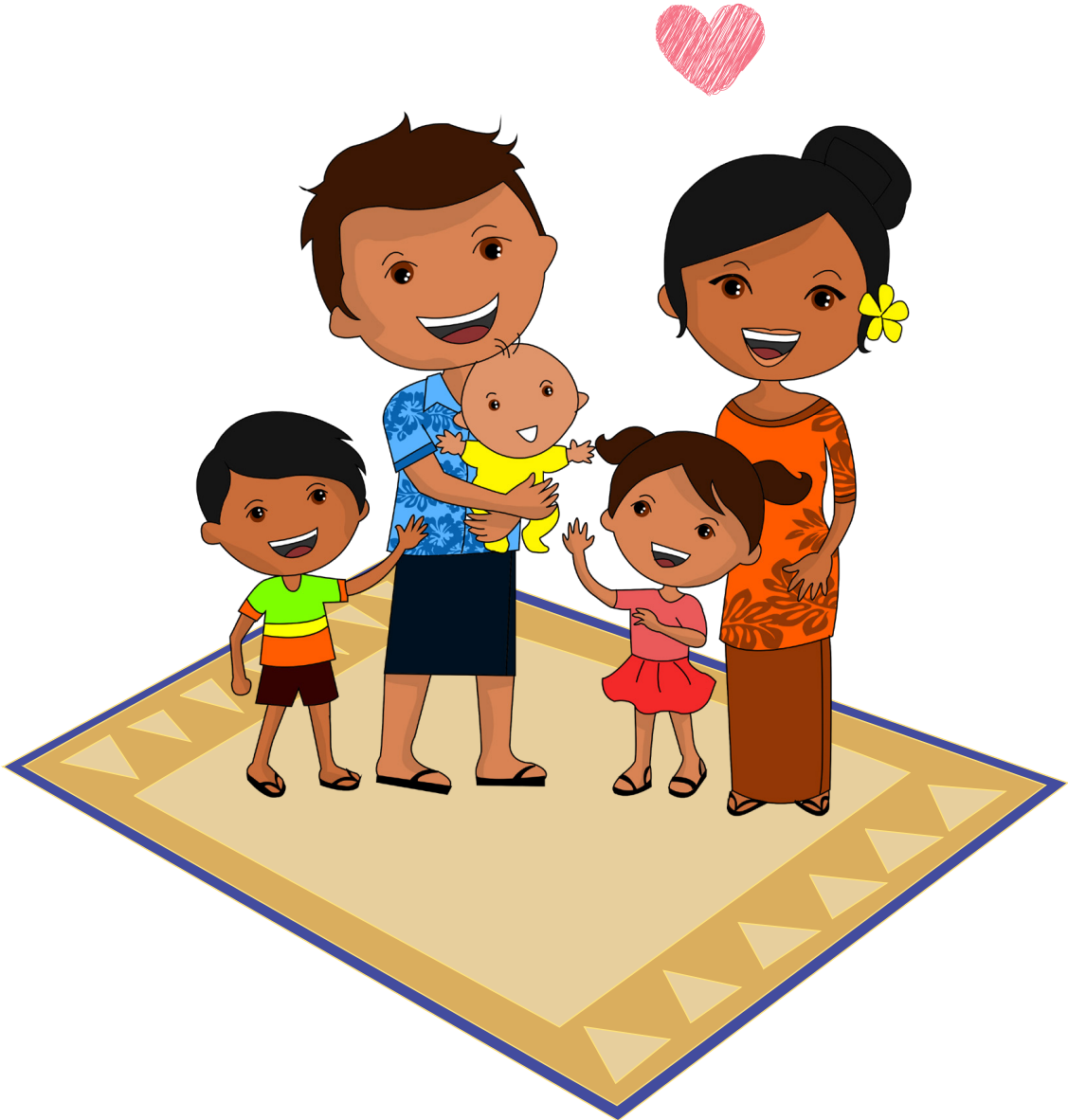
REFERRER DETAILS			
Name of person making referral			
Organization			
Contact details			
CASE DETAILS			
Name of person concerned			
Age of person concerned			
Gender of person concerned			
Persons affected/ concerned (circle answer)	Partner (wife/husband)	Child	Person with disability
	In-law	Fa'afafine/ fa'atama	Elderly (and others)
If it is a child provide the following details	Parents name and contact	Caregivers name and contact	Child's village
Reasons for referral – please explain			
Types of abuse concerned (circle answer)	Physical	Sexual/ rape/ incest	Financial
	Verbal	Emotional	Other (please list)
Other factors involved (circle answer)	Alcohol	Drugs	Mental health
	Children not in school	History of violence	History of offending
Any interventions being undertaken?			





PART 7: Resources for Advocates

RECEIVED BY	
Referral received by	
Contact details	
Name and contact details of person outcome fed back to	



## PART 7: Resources for Advocates



### RESOURCE 4: SAFETY PLAN – A SEVEN STEP SAFETY PLAN TO PROTECT MYSELF AND MY CHILDREN

VBA's can use this as a template to discuss safety plans with victims/survivors of violence.

MY PERSONAL SAFETY PLAN	
Name:	Date:
1	If, I decide to leave, I will [exit direction – front door, window etc.] and go to [name place].
2	I can tell [friend, family member, your pastor/community leader or other people you can trust] about the violence and ask them to seek help with the police and village council, if they hear loud noises, yelling or screaming, breaking of glass, or children crying coming from my house.
3	I can teach my children how to use the mobile phone to contact the police or who to go to in the village that can provide help (for example: VBAs/matai/faipule/faifeau or a safe family member or friend nearby). I will use a code with my children, family, or my friends so they can call for help. [Decide on a code with your children]
4	If/When I have to leave home; I will go [name place]. If I cannot go to that location, then I will go to [name place].
5	I will discuss this plan with some/all of my children so they too will be prepared.
6	I will take my children with me if it is safe to do so.
7	When my husband/partner/spouse is becoming upset, and when I feel unsafe or expect we are going to have an argument, my children and I will go immediately to our safe space [name place]. I will use my judgment and intuition. I have to protect myself and my children until we are out of danger.





## PART 7: Resources for Advocates

### RESOURCE 5: PROTECTION ORDERS

As a VBA you (with the consent of the victim/survivor) can assist in applying for a protection order under the Family Safety Act 2013 [42]. Consent will not be required in the circumstances where the victim/survivor is a child; suffering from a mental illness; in a coma and has been unconscious for a period exceeding 6 hours; or is a person whom the Court reasonably considers unable to provide the required consent.

Alternatively, you can refer the victim/survivor to a specialist support or service provider or police and they can apply for a protection order.

A protection order helps prevent the perpetrator from:

- committing any act of domestic violence or enlisting the help of another person to commit such act;
- entering a residence, or part of such residence, shared by the complainant and the respondent;
- entering the complainant's place of employment, or part of such place;
- preventing the complainant who ordinarily lives or lived in a shared residence from entering or remaining in the shared residence; or
- committing any other act, which the Court considers appropriate in the circumstances, in order to protect the complainant.

#### PROCESS FOR APPLYING FOR A PROTECTION ORDER

**Step 1:** seek consent of victim/survivor unless not required.

**Step 2:** lodge an application with the court through the Court Registrar. Alternatively, you can approach police or specialist support or service provider to lodge an application on behalf of the victim/survivor.

**Step 3:** the court to grant a protection order if it is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence that:

1. the respondent is committing, or has committed an act of domestic violence; and
2. the complainant is likely to be either physically or sexually assaulted as a result of such domestic violence if a protection order is not issued immediately.

**Step 4:** upon granting of a protection order this is to be served to the perpetrator by the police.

**Step 5:** the police need to monitor compliance of the perpetrator with the protection order together with the assistance of the Village Council and VBA.

[64] Family Safety Act 2013, section 4.





## PART 7: Resources for Advocates



### RESOURCE 6: SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR HELP



Ministry of Police  
(Domestic Violence Unit)

**Contact:** 22222

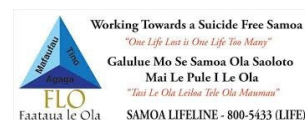
**Type of support:** first responders, domestic violence complaints, lodging protection orders.



Health Services

**Contact:** 911

**Type of support:** emergency services, medical assessment, and treatment, make referrals, social work support.



Faataua le Ola

**Contact:** 800-5433

**Type of support:** suicide prevention, counseling, make referrals, assist in lodging protection orders.



Samoa Victim Support

**Contact:** 800-7874 | 25392

**Type of support:** shelters, counseling, empowerment programmes, make referrals, assist in lodging protection orders.



Samoa Family Health Association

**Contact:** 26929 | 26549

**Type of support:** counseling and services for sexual reproductive health rights, make referrals, assist in lodging protection orders.



Nuanua o le Alofa

**Contact:** 25243 | 21147

**Type of support:** disability support services, assist in lodging protection orders.



Teen Challenge

**Contact:** 25235 | 7701520

**Type of support:** counseling, rehabilitation for youth, make referrals.



Samoa Red Cross Society

**Contact:** 24334

**Type of support:** humanitarian assistance, first aid, awareness raising on disaster risk management and climate change, emergency services.



Samoa National Youth Council

**Contact:**

27804/8422584

**Type of support:** youth empowerment.



## PART 7: Resources for Advocates

### RESOURCE 6: SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR HELP



Talofa Kids Charitable Trust

**Contact:** 7241350 |  
hello@talofakids.com

**Type of support:**  
awareness raising  
programmes on child  
protection, counseling  
for parents and children.



Autau O le Faalotaga

Salvation Army

**Contact:** 8400666

**Type of support:** alcohol,  
drugs and anger  
management counseling,  
rehabilitation for  
perpetrators.



Samoa Fa'afafine Assoc.

**Contact:** 7775171 | 7797799

**Type of support:** support  
for fa'afafine & fa'atama &  
other SOGIESC groups,  
counseling support, make  
referrals, assist in lodging  
protection orders.



Ministry of Women

**Contact:** 27752 | 27753

**Type of support:** child  
protection, domestic  
violence counseling and  
support, GBV awareness,  
make referrals, assist in  
lodging protection orders.



Ministry of Justice

**Contact:** 22672 | 53514

**Type of support:**  
protection order support,  
alcohol, drugs and anger  
management counseling  
referrals, child  
maintenance, divorce  
processes and matters.



Young Women Christian  
Association

**Contact:** 7716560 | 7799393

**Type of support:**  
counseling, awareness  
programme on  
empowerment for young  
women, assist in lodging  
protection orders.



Adventist Development  
Relief Agency Samoa

**Contact:** 27439

**Type of support:**  
humanitarian relief and  
support, make referrals.



**Brown Girl Woke**

Brown Girl Woke

**Contact:** 84-21773 |  
info@browngirlwoke.com

**Type of support:** social  
support, empowerment,  
career coaching, self-  
development mentorship  
for girls, and awareness  
raising against GBV.



Goshen Trust Mental  
Health Services

**Contact:** 27487

**Type of support:**  
rehabilitation support  
and shelter for mental  
health patients.



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